

REMARKS

Pursuant to 37 C.F.R. § 1.173(c), applicant notes that Claims 35 and 52 have been amended to recite that the conveyors define a support plane, with the support plane being perpendicular to the radial component in which the conveyors are moved relative to the drive shaft, and that the conveyors comprise a seal member.

Support for these amendments is found in Fig. 2 showing a sealing frame 12. Fig. 2 also shows conveyors 19 in the form of a plate which each defines a support plane. Fig. 2 also shows the support plane to be perpendicular to the radial component A5 in which the conveyors 19 are moved independently of each other. The seal member is the subject matter of original Claim 10.

The dependency of Claim 45 has been changed due to the cancellation of Claim 44.

Claim 72 has been amended to define the workpiece as disk-shaped as found in original Claim 12 and the above-referenced support plane of the conveyors. Claim 72 has also been amended to recite the step of sealing closing one of the openings as supported at Col 6. Lines 3-36 of the Specification.

Not in claims

The objection to Claim 35 and the rejection of Claim 72 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, ¶2 are now deemed moot.

Reconsideration of the rejections, which applicant traverses, of Claims 35-38, 49, 50 and 72 as being anticipated by Toshimasa under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b), of Claims 52-54 as being anticipated by Schertler under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b), of

Claims 35-42, 44, 49, 50 and 72 as being unpatentable over Helms in view of Lorenz et al. under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), of Claim 43 as being unpatentable over Helms in view of Lorenz and Schertler under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), of Claim 45 as being unpatentable over Helms in view of Lorenz and Boys et al. under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), of Claims 46-48 as being unpatentable over Helms in view of Lorenz and Lavinsky et al. under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), and of Helms in view of Lorenz and Simone under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) is earnestly solicited.

The Toshimasa document teaches transport in disk-shaped workpieces but with their disk planes parallel to radial movement. If the workpieces were to be left on the respective conveyors during treatment, it would not be possible to sealingly close off the opening towards the treatment station, because the respective transport arm would, of necessity, prevent a sealed closing. This must be contrasted with the present invention in which the disk-shaped workpieces are radially moved towards the openings with their plane perpendicular to such radial movement. Thereby, the workpieces can remain upon the conveyors during treatment while the opening towards the treatment chamber can be sealingly closed.

The Schertler patent does not teach radially moving the conveyors, but teaches moving such conveyors parallel to the rotational axis. The workpieces are provided with a plane that is parallel to the arm of the transport arrangement and thus perpendicularly to the rotational axis of the transport device.

Fig. 6 of the Helms patent shows conveyors for disk-shaped workpieces, which conveyors are perpendicular to the rotational axis of the transport arrangement. If the disk-shaped workpieces were to remain on the conveyors during treatment, then the respective openings to the treatment station could not be sealed, because the transport arms would bar such closing. Taken alone or in combination with the Toshimasa and/or Schertler documents, the Helms patent would not provide grounds to defeat patentability of the present invention. Toshimasa, Schertler and Helms transport the disk-shaped workpieces with the disk plane perpendicular to the rotational axis of the transport arrangement, not as perpendicular to the radial transport direction.

The disk-shaped workpieces arrangement relative to the rotational axis of the transport arrangement in the Lorenz et al. patent is no different from that of Toshimasa, Schertler and Helms. That is, they all arrange the disk-shaped workpieces perpendicular to the rotational axis. The drawback of this is that the workpiece may not be kept upon the conveyors during treatment, while simultaneously sealing the opening. This is in clear opposition to the present invention.

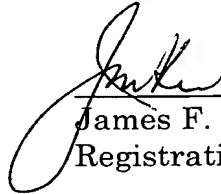
If there are any questions regarding this amendment or the application in general, a telephone call to the undersigned would be appreciated since this should expedite the prosecution of the application for all concerned.

If necessary to effect a timely response, this paper should be considered as a petition for an Extension of Time sufficient to effect a timely response, and

please charge any deficiency in fees or credit any overpayments to Deposit
Account No. 05-1323 (Docket #622/40901C2).

Respectfully submitted,

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James F. McKeown
Registration No. 25,406

CROWELL & MORING, LLP
P.O. Box 14300
Washington, DC 20044-4300
Telephone No.: (202) 624-2500
Facsimile No.: (202) 628-8844
CAM No. 080310.40901C2